GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2830
ANSWERED ON:02.08.2017
Relation with ASEAN Countries
Patel Smt. Jayshreeben

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the efforts made by the Government to strengthen relations between India and other ASEAN countries;

(b) the number of agreements regarding commerce, military etc. signed with these countries; and

(c) the extent to which trade has increased and the manner in which the countries are likely to get benefited at the international platform?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) In 2014, Government of India announced the transformation of India's Look East Policy to an Act East Policy, with a focus on strengthening India's relations with its extended neighbourhood in the Asia-Pacific region, which includes all ASEAN countries. The policy, which was originally conceived as an economic initiative, has gained political, strategic and cultural dimensions including establishment of institutional mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation. Among ASEAN countries, India has strategic partnerships with Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Enhancing connectivity with ASEAN countries is a priority in this context, for regional integration and prosperity. To this effect, India has announced an LoC of US $1 Billion to ASEAN countries, for undertaking projects to promote physical and digital connectivity.

Steady efforts are also being made to develop and strengthen connectivity of Northeast India with the ASEAN countries through trade, culture, people-to-people contacts and physical infrastructure (road, airport, telecommunication and power). Some of the major ongoing projects to improve connectivity between Northeast India and the countries of ASEAN include Kaladan Multi-modal Transit Transport Project, the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway Project, Rhi-Tiddim Road Project and Border Haats.

On the civilizational front, synergies are being built through cultural connectivity with ASEAN countries. In this regard, India has also been actively supporting restoration of monuments in Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos, which have distinct Indian influences.

Since 2014, visits at the level of Prime Minister, President and Vice President have been undertaken to 9 out of 10 ASEAN countries.

(b) India has signed 23 bilateral agreements in commerce and trade sectors and 21 bilateral agreements in the defense and military domain with the ASEAN Countries.

(c) India and ASEAN share deep economic ties. The coming into force of the ASEAN-India Free Trade Area in July 2015 and the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community in December 2015 have given a major boost to bilateral trade. ASEAN is India''s 4th largest trading partner, accounting for 10% of India's total trade. Bilateral trade with ASEAN countries which was US $2 billion in 1992, is now US$ 70 billion in 2016-17. India is also actively participating in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations, which would further integrate participating countries in the region (ASEAN countries +6 countries including India), to benefit their economies.